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THE MOEN COLLECTION OF
EASTERN TURKI (NEW UIGHUR)
POPULAR POETRY

EDITED WITH TRANSLATION
NOTES AND GLOSSARY

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Introduction

In 1985 I published, in this series, a collection of Eastern Turki proverbs and popular sayings brought together by Rev. Sigfrid Moen (1897–1989) of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden during his stay as a missionary in what was then called Eastern Turkestan, today the province of Xinjiang of the People's Republic of China. These proverbs and popular sayings were an integral part of a collection of specimens of Eastern Turki popular literature presented to me by Moen which I later on donated to the manuscript department of the University Library of Lund.

I now follow up with the publication of the specimens of Eastern Turki popular poetry which are to be found in the Moen collection. They all belong to the period 1930–1938. They were recorded by Moen at irregular intervals in different places in southern Xinjiang.

All these specimens of Eastern Turki popular poetry contained in the Moen collection are of the *qošaƣ*-type, that is rhymed quatrains, which are to be found in the oral literature of most of the Turkic peoples. The only exceptions are quatrain no. 4 and possibly no. 5 which seem to be of literary origin.

Most of these *qošaƣ* which I now present are not represented in the existing collections of Eastern Turki folk literature.¹ Moen thus gives a valuable addition to our supply of this kind of Turki popular poetry. It should furthermore be added that Moen's collections also contain some useful descriptions of popular customs and ways of thinking. Moreover they also contribute to our scanty supply of Eastern Turki dialectal materials.

For the construction and composition of the *qošaƣ*-form of poetry I refer to Reichl's analysis.² But I would like to add a few observations.

Most of these quatrains deal with love, often unhappy or deceitful love. Feelings and emotions are usually expressed in clear language but sometimes in a hidden language which makes the logic of the verse difficult to follow. The most unexpected statements may appear, mostly in the second line of the poem. But they are intentionally there – with hidden meanings of their own – see for example *qošaƣ* no. 11 and 12.

Alliteration occurs from time to time. I refer to no. 31 *baqqe kirip bayban bolup* and no. 56 *qap qara do qašlerij*.

¹ v. the references to the existing literature in Geng Shimin & Reichl, *Uigurische Vierzeiler*. In my text parallels to each specific *qošaƣ* are indicated below the item in question. To my great regret the rich collections of Uighur popular poetry published lately in Urumchi have not been available to me.

² op. cit., pp. 55–58

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